

A N  
APOLOGETICALL ACCOUNT,  
OF SOME  
BRETHREN

OF  
The Church wherof Mr. John Goodwin is Pastor:  
(On the behalf of the Church.)

Why they cannot execute that Unchristian and  
passionate Charge, viz.

*Of delivering up their said Pastor unto Satan, &c.*

Which is imposed upon them, in the sixth Page of a late  
Printed Book, called, *A Vindication of a Printed Paper, &c.*

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Acts 25. 7. *And they laid many and grievous complaints against Paul,  
which they could not prove.*

Luk. 9. 55. *But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what  
manner spirit ye are of.*

2 Cor. 13. 8. *For we can doe nothing against the truth, but for the truth,*

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*Published according to Order.*

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A N

Apologeticall Account of some Bre-  
thren of the Church, whereof Mr. JOHN  
GOODVIN is Pastour.  
(On the behalf of the Church.)

**I**T was a generall observation among the Heathen, that Envy was an inseparable companion unto Vertue. And truly if Christians would but consult with the experience of all ages, they should finde that Holinesse hath been constantly haunted with the like or a worse spirit; the former being but a slight provocation to flesh and blood in comparison of this latter. Our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who spake as never man spake, and acted for the glory of his Father at a higher rate, then the Angels themselves can attain unto, was stigmatiz'd by the Rulers of the Jewish Church, with those odious titles of *blasphemer, devill, a friend of Publicans and sinners*. And such as have followed him closest in the regeneration, hath the world forced to drink deepest with him of this bitter cup. The Apostle *Paul*, who (above all the sonnes of men) drew the most perfect resemblance of this heavenly patern, had much adoe to uphold the honour and dignity of his Name, even in the Churches of Christ, against the suggestions of false teachers? We conceive it a work of no great difficulty to produce out of every Century since the comming of our Lord, variety of examples of this nature: and to shew how in all times such as have been most richly furnisht from heaven, to doe service to that God that dwells therein, have deeply suffered in this kinde, and that from those, who were zealous pretenders to the same sacred employment and service with them.



But is not the counsell of God, and the hand of Satan in all this? yea doubtlesse, though the one be founded in wisdom and love; the other stretch'd forth in hatred and revenge. The Devill through that enmity which is in him to the glory of his Creator, and the everlasting peace and salvation of the creature, burns with extreame jealousie against all those, who are best appointed with courage and skill to practise upon his vassals, and to make the widest breaches upon his territories; and because he knows there is no way, more likely to render their attempts fruitlesse, and to lay their highest atchievements for the throne of heaven in the dust, then to cast dead flies into the box of their oyntment; he therefore provokes all the interest he hath in the tongues and hearts of men to wound their Names, that if it be possible the credit and reputation of them might bleed even unto death. But wherein this *grand accuser of the brethren* thinks he deals wisely, therein God is above him; and compels this stratagem of his against his servants to become contributory to his own ends and their good. For though *knowledge and abundance of revelations* are apt through the weakness of the flesh to puffed up even the best of men, yet these *buffetings by the messengers of Satan* prove excellent correctives of such swellings; and are a proper means to keep their hearts in an humble and low posture: which posture as it makes them capable of the largest infusion of grace, so doth it principally qualifie them to become instruments for Gods hand. Whereas if they wanted this qualification, though accommodated in all other respects for his service, hee would soone lay them by the wals as uselesse tooles (and so his occasions in the world might suffer lesse) for certainly in the election of meanes for his owne ends, he passes by proud and high persons with as much neglect and disdain, as proud and high things.

The consideration hereof (amongst other things relating hereunto) as it had (we doubt not) a soveraigne influence upon our dearly beloved Pastor, for the strengthening of him against the assaults of the powers of darknesse and this world; so had it somewhat the like operation upon us also; who otherwise could not have borne the cruell outragious and malicious dealings of men towards him, with that equanimity and moderation of spirit wee have done, To see a beautifull visage canlesly deformed by the tal-  
lons



lons of cruelty, is a sight which cannot but afflict nature : but to see innocency suffer for truths sake, oh how grievous, how oppressing is it to an ingenuous and gracious spirit ? and this was our case in respect of him. Our experience and strict observation of him for some yeares together, fill'd us to the very brim with assurance of his integrity and faithfulness both to God and man : and this assurance made us so exceeding tender in our affections and respects to him, that the loud and furious outcries of some against him were as a sword which pierced our bowels thorough and thorough. Nevertheless, it came not into all our thoughts to move for his vindication one step beyond the sphere of those places and companies whither our private occasions led us : yet ignorant wee were not, what advantage his accusers had of us in this respect : we knew full well, that the line of our occasions and opportunities was too short to traverse the circumference of the Presse ; and consequently, that it was impossible for us to gather up by our apologies and defence, what they had scattered in the mindes and opinions of men by the hand thereof : Our hope indeed was, that what through our private testimonies and ingagements on the one hand, and his publique vindications of himselfe on the other, and the blessing of God upon both ; the wise and sober part of the world might have been antidoted against the poyson of their informations. However we perswaded our selves, that the day was not far off, when those *ways* and *truths* for which he suffer'd, would rise out of their graves, and ascend upon the Throne, and draw his name out of its dust and ashes after them to partake with themselves in their glory : And under this expectation we posselt our soules in patience ; only we could not in the mean time but weepe in secret over the astonishing wickednesse and folly of this age, which spits its venome in the faces of such, as most industriously promote the things of the peace and welfare of it.

But the breaking forth of a late treatise called a Vindication of a printed Paper, &c. or rather the breakings out of an unchristian spirit in that Treatise, have even forced the pen into our hands, and laid a necessity upon us to let the world know, why wee doe not, wee dare not, wee cannot, obey the voice of this spirit speaking unto us in blacknesse and darknesse, in smoake and fire out of the midst of it : For our parts, we cannot but thus judge concerning  
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the Authour or Authours of that *Vindication*, that when they imposed upon us that direfull charge therein specified, they were under the power and actings of the same inspirations with the Jewes, when they cryed out to *Pilate* against our Saviour, *crucifie him, crucifie him*: And doubtlesse *Pilate* had as much reason to gratifie the bloody desires of this people, as we have to *deliver him up unto Satan*: whom we know to be a most faithfull Servant and Minister of Jesus Christ, (there being no reason either for the one or the other.) That blasphemy for which wee are commanded to throw the thunderbolt of excommunication against him being enquired into, wee are confident, will be found to be but of the same nature and consideration with that, for which this *just* and *holy One* was put to death, that is, no blasphemy at all. If to vindicate the truths of God from the false and lying imaginations of men: if to maintaine the royalties of Christ and the priviledges of his Subjects, against the encroachments & tyranny of the World; if to stand in the gap, and indeavour to keepe out the horn'd beast of persecution from the societies and bodies of the Saints, if this be blasphemy, we confesse him to be one of the greatest blasphemers under heaven; and upon these termes, willing we are to quit our interest in him, and resigne him up into the jurisdiction of him who is his, and our greatest enemy. But though such wayes and practises as these, are arraigned and condemned too under the names of Heresie, Blasphemy, and the like, in the consistories of men, where their carnall ntrests and accommodations sit as Judges; yet our comfort is, that the sentence shall be reverst in the Court of Heaven; and all engagements of this nature shall then bee rewarded as loyalty and faithfulness, to the great King that rules there.

We have fully known his *Doctrine, Life, and Conversation*, and as farre as by the use of our reasons, understandings, and observations we are able to judge of them, they are *according to truth*, and *as becomes the Gospel of the Lord Jesus*. Those streames of light which have run through the current of his Ministry, have been as pure and unmixt from any tincture of darknesse, as the earthlinesse and weaknesse of the vessell from whence they issued, could well permit: The *Doctrines of the Father and of the Son*, the involving whereof in the clouds of *uncertainty*, the said *Vindication* most falsely and maliciously charges upon him, hath he brought into so cleer and



and open view, that we have seen the peace and everlasting salvation of our soules in them. Every one of those Fundamentall principles of Christian Religion, which this gangren'd pen would perswade the world he denies or doubts of, hath he not onely asserted in our hearing againe and againe, but prov'd them with such evidence and demonstration of the spirit, that our consciences were forced to fall flat before them, and to confesse that of a truth God was in them. Sure we are, he hath laid amongst us that true and everlasting foundation Jesus Christ, other then which no man can lay without extreame perill of himself and his Disciples. But because the knowledge of the most knowing attaines not perfection in this life (Errors and misprisions being mixt with their choycest and purest notions) we confesse tis possible that the structure he hath set upon this foundation is not all of *gold, silver, and precious stones*: Perhaps somewhat of the nature of *wood, hay, and stubble* will be found in it: Yet of this we are strongly posselt, and that not upon light and loose grounds, that his *Works* and *Labours* in this kind shall suffer as little losse by fire in the day of purgation, as the *Works* of any his fellow-labourers whosoever. The truth is, we cannot but blesse the hand of that Providence, which planted us by the waters of his Ministry, the streams whereof make glad our hearts, and refresh the very root of our soules with the refreshings of the Almighty. As for his life, we have seen *holinesse to the Lord*, engraven in faire and convincing characters upon the forehead of it: Verily, the signes of a true *Minister of Christ*, and of an *Elder* indeed of his Church, hath he wrought amongst us in all wisdom, temperance, gravity, humblenesse, patience, faithfulness and love. And therefore wee apeale to all sober and reasonable men, whether to *withdraw all converse from him* upon the bare injunctions of the passions and distempers of any whomsoever, were not to dispise this grace of God, and to consult leannesse, barrennesse, and trouble to our soules? Or whether to joyn him and excommunication together, were not to make one of the most accursed matches that the policy of the Devill, and wickednesse of men e're conspired?

Whether the publishing of some *humble and modest Queries*, or in particular that *Query* upon which these men fall so foule, that they seem to be starke drunke with rage and fuery, will admount



\* Vid. Hagio-  
mistic, or the  
scourge of the  
Sts. displayed  
in his colours  
of ignorance &  
blood.

to wickednesse and blasphemy; or whether any thing of affinity unto these be contain'd in the bowels of it; we presume all intelligent men may receive satisfaction from a far more able, and (in some respect) more interested pen\* then curs. We have looked upon this *Query* againe and againe, wee have searched into the bottome of it with all possible exactnesse and impartiality, and professe that we cannot finde that blacke and cursed treasure in it, no nor the least veine thereof over which they so insultingly rejoyce. If they indeed saw in it such fearfull and gashly apparitions as they cry out of, we have cause to thinke, that they looked through the false spectacles of malice, hatred, and revenge. Wee know the great Chymist of Hell is labouring night and day to metamorphise *Truth* into *error*, *innocency* and *holynesse* into *wickednesse* and *faction*, the *Order* of the *Gospel* into *schisme* and *confusion*. If any in imitation of him (or rather through inspiration from him) shall extract by the fire of their passions desperate conclusions from harmelesse premises, we bewaile their proficiency in this black art, and abhorre it. As for these *Persons*, certainly they had never found such a riddle & complication of *blasphemy* in a *Query* so innocent and inoffensive, had they ploughed with the fair heifer of *Love*, which as the Apostle speaks, *thinketh no evil, beareth all things, beleeueth all things, hopeth all things*. And yet wee are perswaded, that they triumph in face, more than in heart; and are conscious to themselves, that those great *spoyle*s, which they boast like Emperours to have taken from the *Querists* name, are but *cockles*, i. mere flourishes and bubbles. For had they judged themselves able to make good their fore charge of *blasphemy* against him, in all likelihood he had felt the scorching heat of their zeale, and been convented before Rulers and Magistrates long ere this: to thinke otherwise, were to conceive that they are lesse zealous for *Truths* then for *Tyt's*, for the cause and glory of God, then their owne greatnesse and domination.

But is it not a sad thing, and of portentuous consequence, that such great pretenders not to the Office only, but the Qualifications of an Elder, should act so diametrically opposite thereunto? should become publique brawlers and revilers, should smite their fellow-servant in a place more tender then his eye, viz. in his *name* and *honour*, should arraigne him, judge him, and condemne him unto hell, and



and all for no other crime, upon no other witnesse, then the publishing a naked *Query*, the nature whereof (all men know) is neither to assert any thing, nor deny? Nay, which is more, should conjure others also, even a whole Church of Christ to be copartners with them in their sin, and to helpe them to poure out the dregs of their cruell and unrighteous wrath upon their owne *Pastor*? What *Reine*? what temper of spirit shall we call this? if they themselves will call it zeale, we will call it so too; but it is a zeale from beneath and symbolizeth in properties with that wisdome which comes from the same place, which (as *James* tells us) is *earthly, sensuall, and devillish*. If he had dropt any *sentence* in Print, the face whereof might have been forc'd to looke towards the borders of wickednesse and blasphemy; yet it became Elders to use it gently, and to take that to be the sense and meaning of it which it gave out freely and without torture. A *Christian Method* from which others likewise have lately deviated in perverting his sense and sayings, and thereupon reporting that he denies the Scriptures to be the Word of God; whereas he hath engaged more thoughts, spent more houres, preached more Sermons for the vindication of the divine Originall of the Scriptures out of the hands of jealousie and unbeliefe, then any of his profession that we know. And were his labour in this kinde transmitted to publique view, if wee should judge of the fruits of it, by what wee have found in our selves, doubtlesse it would blesse the world, and be the establishment of the hearts of thousands in this great Fundamentall Truth.

Again, suppose he had published something which struck point-blanke at a maine principle of the Gospell (a supposition which malice it selfe in conjunction with sophistry will never be able to make good) it had been their Office (if they would needs intermeddle) to have advised us to admonish him once and againe, and to endeavour in love and patience to convince him, before we proceeded any further; but to command us upon such peremptory terms as they doe, at the very first dash to excommunicate him, without any tryall, admonition, or meanes of conviction going before; What does this but argue, that they have more of Christ, his spirit, minde, and government in their *lips* and *pens*, then in their hearts and *ways*? Such *overtures* of their great sufficiency to rule and governe, as this is, wee thinke are sufficient cautions to the



State to deny them that *royall crowne* which they so earnestly desire and run for ; it being an act of equall improvidence, to put a sharpe knife into a child's hand, and to give *power* to passionate and unreasonable men. Were they accommodated in all things to their hearts content, they would soone make the best to feel, what the most do feare, that the little finger of their Discipline would be thicker in persecution then their Predecessors Loynes. The soundest and ablest Christians in the Land could not possibly scape free from their rods and scorpions, had they as good *authority* to punish Heresies and Blasphemies *how* they please, as they have a *faculty* to make Heresies and Blasphemies of *what* they please.

One thing further we desire the *Reader* to take notice of, that they presse us with the most prevailing motives under Heaven to do that, which they themselves judge sinfull and altogether unlawfull for us to doe. *The power of the keyes by divine right* is questionlesse one of the *Regalia Imperii*, a chiefe Royalty of that sacred Empire, for which they with others of their *Order* contend so strenuously, that they make the foundations of the Land shake and tremble under them. For any to intermeddle herein with unconsecrated hands, is the great abomination of their soules : And yet though they cannot but know, that not one drop of their consecrating oyle hath touch'd our heads, they *charge* us as we regard the *honour of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the authority of the Spirit*, to execute the highest censure, not onely without, and against the consent, but upon the person of our *onely Elder*. What is this, but to make these great and sacred *Names*, which are the chiefe incentives unto holinesse, to become the Ministers of sin, at least of that which they call so ? Whether they have not hereby insinuated thus much into the mindes of many, that they can speake any thing, doe any thing, command any thing, permit any thing to *serve a turne*, we leave to themselves to determine. In our apprehensions they seem to be somewhat of his minde, who thus cruelly resolved with himselfe, *percant amici, dummodo percant inimici* : They can finde in their hearts to shake a maine pillar of their Babel, or suffer their *jus divinum* to fall to the gound, so the *man* of their hatred and indignation might fall together with it.

But to conclude, we have turned their *injunction* upside down, wee have viewed it on all sides, as it faces *themselves*, the *querists*,  
and



and us, and find it in every respect so abhorrent to all principles of ingenuity, civility, reason and religion, that the very thought of it makes us quake. To perpetrate, such a deed of darknesse against him, whom God hath made more precious to us then our lives is by far more grievous to our spirits, then to cut off our right hands and pull out our right eyes, would be unto our flesh. Wee could open our mouthes yet seven times wider on his behalfe then wee have done. But wee are unwilling to provoke the rage of his accusers and enemies any further, in reflecting shame upon the darknesse of their weakenesses and folly (to say no more) by the light of his life and conversation. In the presence of Angels and men, we call God for a record upon our soules, that we know nothing by him, which deserves the lightest censure of a Church, all his deportments amongst us calling for love, reverence, honour, and imitation. And our prayer unto God is that he would by the influence of his Doctrine and Example make us so abundantly fruitfull in all well doing, that as He is our glory and rejoycing for the present, so Wee may be his glory and the Crowne of his rejoycing in the day of the Lord Iesus.

Robert Smith.

Marke Hildesley.

Robert Saunders.

Thomas Davenish.

William Mountague.

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Joseph Gallant.

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William Godfrey.

John Dye.

Daniel Taylor.

James Paris.

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Bartholomew Lavender.

Richard Preece.

Thomas Morris.

John Price.

Richard Arnald.

Henry Overton.

Phillip Webberly.

FINIS.